

STATE OF INDIANA

STATE STUDENT ASSISTANCE COMMISSION OF INDIANA



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TO: Indiana School Superintendents, Principals, School Counselors, and Higher Education Financial Aid Offices

FROM: Kathi Graves, Director, Grants Division *KG*

RE: Mitch Daniels Early Graduation Scholarship

DATE: December 16, 2011

The 2011 Indiana General Assembly passed IC-21-12-10 to establish defined educational benefits for students who graduate at least one (1) complete year early from a publicly supported school. Known as the Mitch Daniels Early Graduation Scholarship, the benefit covers \$4,000 of tuition and regularly assessed fees (fees charged to all students) as defined by the Indiana Commission for Higher Education ("CHE") and the State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana ("SSACI"), to attend a SSACI-approved eligible higher education institution. The benefit is paid by SSACI to colleges on behalf of the eligible student upon receipt of a bill, and is paid out of the State General Fund using money that would otherwise go to fund state tuition support for that student corporation designated funds and applied first to any remaining tuition and regularly assessed fees.

An individual is eligible for a Mitch Daniels Early Graduation Scholarship if the student:

- 1) is a resident of Indiana;
- 2) attended a publicly supported school (defined in IC 21-12-10-1) on a full time equivalency basis for at least the last two semesters before the individual graduated;
- 3) had legal settlement in Indiana for at least the last two semesters before graduating;
- 4) met at least the minimum requirements set by the Indiana State Board of Education for granting a high school diploma by the end of grade 11 (including summer school courses completed by July 1 of a year) and was awarded after December 31, 2010, a high school diploma by the publicly supported school that the individual last attended for course credits earned before the end of grade 11, including any summer school courses completed before July 1 of a year;
- 5) was not enrolled in a publicly supported school for any part of grade 12; of the fourth year (12);
- 6) applies to SSACI (see "How to Apply" section below); and
- 7) within five (5) months after graduating from high school, becomes a student in good standing taking classes at an approved postsecondary educational institution whose students are eligible to receive a higher education award (IC 21-12-3-11) or a freedom of choice grant (IC 21-12-4-4) and is engaged in a program that will lead to an approved postsecondary degree or credential. A list of SSACI eligible colleges can be found at <http://www.in.gov/ssaci/2334.htm>.

SSACI must verify that the student's matriculation, Mitch Daniels Early Graduation Scholarship application, and FAFSA filing and contents meet the requirements for the student to be eligible for this

scholarship before the college may bill SSACI for the eligible student. Colleges must refund to SSACI any Mitch Daniels Early Graduation Scholarship funds provided to colleges on behalf of students who are later discovered to be ineligible for this scholarship.

Students with a General Diploma who are graduating early are not considered eligible for the Mitch Daniels Early Graduation Scholarship. The student in this situation has chosen to “opt out” of the minimum graduation requirements of Core 40, and by graduating early, the student is choosing not to exhaust all other options to meet the Core 40 diploma scholarship criteria. Student applicants for this scholarship must pass the Algebra I and English 10 End of Course assessments and must graduate before July 1 of the applicable year, including any summer school courses completed before July 1 of a year.

How to Apply

The Mitch Daniels Early Graduation Scholarship application will be available on SSACI’s website in January 2012. The application must be received by SSACI no later than September 4, 2012. To be considered for eligibility, applicants must also file the appropriate academic year’s Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at www.fafsa.ed.gov, and it must be received by the federal Central Processing System (CPS) no later than September 4, 2012. For example, students should file a 2012-2013 FAFSA for the 2012-2013 Academic Year enrollment. SSACI will verify the applicant’s eligibility for the Mitch Daniels Early Graduation Scholarship. This is a one-time benefit and may not be renewed.

Students should follow the steps below to apply.

1. Download and complete the “Student Information Section” of the Mitch Daniels Early Graduation Scholarship application by September 4, 2012.
2. Bring the form to the high school from which the student graduates.
3. Have the high school complete and verify the “High School Data” section. **This application must be signed by the high school principal of the high school or the superintendent of the student’s school corporation and notarized**, which determines eligibility for this scholarship.
4. Provide the signed application to SSACI by mail. The application must be received by SSACI no later than September 4, 2012. **This form may *not* be provided via fax at any step of the application process.**
 - a. Mailed applications should be sent to the following:
State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana (SSACI)
ATTN: Mitch Daniels Early Graduation Scholarship
402 W. Washington Street W462
Indianapolis, IN 46204
5. File a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for the year in which the student graduates high school. If the student is graduating in June 2012, the student should file a 2012-2013 FAFSA, which must be received at the federal Central Processing System by September 4, 2012).

Questions on eligibility based on early graduation should be directed to the Indiana Department of Education at 317.232.0510 or 317.234.2134. High school guidance counselor questions on Mitch Daniels Early Graduation Scholarship payments should be directed to SSACI at 317.232.2350 or ahdc40@ssaci.in.gov. Student inquiries should be directed to SSACI at 317.232.2350 or grants@ssaci.in.gov.